BF 1272
.W156
Copy 1

THE TRUTH

Shall Make You Free.

A LECTURE,

Delivered Sunday, December 24, 1876

BEFORE THE

SANTA BARBARA SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION.

BY

JOSEPHINE WALCOTT.

SANTA BARBARA:

TRIBUNE PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1877.

THE TRUTH

Shall Make You Free.

A LECTURE,

Delivered Sunday, December 24, 1876

BEFORE THE

SANTA BARBARA SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION

BY

JOSEPHINE WALCOTT.

SANTA BARBARA:
TRIBUNE PUBLISHING COMPANY.
1877.

BF1272
.W156

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by
JOSEPHINE WALCOTT,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

E.L.C. Nov. 11/16

THE TRUTH
Shall Make You Free.

The aspiration for Freedom is one of the innate inspirations of the human soul. In the lower, primary conditions of organized life, the same desire is manifest in the struggle for and maintainance of the unrestrained volition of physical powers. The chained brute will chafe and fret in foams of passion for the liberty of his native wilds. The caged bird beats with restless pinions the prison bars that shuts its narrow space from the freedom of the outer, unlimited atmosphere. The groveling reptile struggles beneath the oppression of a careless foot. The veriest serf fulfils with reluctant drudgery the tasks alloted by his master.

All nature is eloquent with the grandeur of freedom. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The sunshine illumines the void of space, unthwarted by the finite will. The mighty impulse of life throbs in the bosom of the earth, and responsive to the sacred volition, abundant verdure springs upon every side.

In the great wilderness of natural life, there is freedom to fulfil the destinies of being. The rivers seek the larger element of ocean. The oceans toss and tumble in awful liberty, yet make no mistake. All nature is safe in freedom, because freedom itself is held in the grasp of immutable and universal law, without which, not anything is free, and in which, there is freedom for every element of animate and inanimate life.

Within the enlightened thought of every soul, there reigns a desire for larger and more comprehensive realities; a fulfilment of the noble ideals that have evolved

new grace and glory with each successive age.

Thrilling through the destinies of soul existence is the Spartan cry for Freedom. "Give me liberty or give me death." Liberty for the body and liberty for the soul. Liberty to consecrate to the highest and most conscientious uses every function of being. Liberty to seek for happiness, and the fulfilment of our noblest aspirations in whatsoever avenue the highest intelligence shall dictate.

What, then, shall make us free? Far backward in the vast ages, was uttered this transcendent aphorism, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." How then shall we know the truth? What new lens shall open to the spiritual vision new vistas of revelation? How shall we rise from the shackles of ignorance, prejudice and superstition? How shall we eliminate the intelligence from the parasite encumbrance of false

education and transmitted opinions? How shall we unfold that greatness of intellect that shall fathom and make plain the mysteries of the law of life? We answer, as the lower is a stepping grade to the higher---the lesser to the greater---the younger to the elder,---so the past shall be to the future, only much more abundant.

Every perfect solution to the world's vast problems has been in answer to earnest, unremitting questioning, and rigid, unswerving investigation. Nature becomes a revelator to the eager seeker after her hidden harmonies. The scientist delves into the inner labyrinths of the earth, and it is revealed to him of æons on æons of time---of eternities of the past---that by the little span of the present may be linked with eternities to come; with him there is neither begining nor ending, but gradation in the everlasting cycles toward perfection. He speaks to the flowers and they yield to him the secret of incense, growth

and bloom. The trees are as oracles, and every shrub a high priest of knowledge. The firmament expands above him as an open book, lettered with myriad stars. He measures the constellations and reveals to us worlds upon worlds, countless as atoms that float in infinite space.

But to him that questions not, all nature is shut and sealed; the earth is a compact of rock and soil for his shuffling, shambling feet---the illumined dome of skies a roof stuck with candles that he may better grope his way about.

But when thought and reason wrestle together in earnest conflict after truth, mind in contact with mind, intelligence with intelligence, in eager friction, some glimmer is sure to penetrate the portals of unwilling ignorance and doubt, and though none may comprehend all of absolute truth, yet the relative condition of each mind is higher, better and more receptive for honest research and candid

reasoning. "Come, let us reason together," said the ancient prophet evoked by the spirit of investigation, and St. Paul, one of the most learned of ancient seekers after the true philsophies of life reasoned with the people they might find the freedom of truth, and to-day, throughout the civilized world, the great and learned of intellect are saying, each unto each, "Come, let us unite our endeavor and see what manifold secrets nature will unfold from her labratory. Let us combine our intelligence and see what lofty revelations shall make answer to our aspiration and research.

Thus the chemist, the naturalist, the philosopher tread hand in hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder the upper paths of knowledge; neither may one impede the other for all seeming differences resolve themselves into perfect harmonies on the clear, serene heights where truth unfolds her inspirations and her laws.

"What is the good of it?" is the question of the unthinking mind when some new truth is elicited from the wide domain of the hitherto undiscovered or unaccepted ---not realizing that all truth, however insignificant in its seeming relations to humanity, when once received into the mind as such, is the nucleus from which evolve still grander perceptions, widening and illuminating the mental horizon until the whole being becomes radiated and transfigured by this inflow from the divine.

A single drop of water is replete with beautiful revelation: analytically considered, it becomes the focus of myriad forms of life with infinite possibilities of renewal and expansion. So it is with a single mental conception. If it embody one germ of truth, it is the nucleus of a manifold developement, attractiug unto itself from the realm of universal facts and realities, until the mental and spir-

itual perceptions become so quickened and enlarged, that truth for its own sake is the spontaneous desire and food for the soul.

The purposes of this life are for discipline and to be of use---the attainment of truth its aim. Then should we fearlessly seek out all *truth, trusting to the harmony of God's law for the end.*

What is the good of it? None may estimate the value of a single truth. For whose benefit? For the benefit of unnumbered millions, and for mi'lions yet unborn. Nothing is insignificant that pertains to human destiny---nothing is common or unclean, if folded in the white clasp of truth.

We have always been an advocate of reform: not sudden revolutionary reforms but steady, straightforward innovations to new and better conditions---a progress that rights things in the right way. Old fallacies need not be perpetuated because

they are old: we may not abuse them, but having served their purpose, let them pass away. A false theory is sometimes a stepping stone to that which is true, so we may treat error dispassionatly---it may at least contain an experience that shall index to true conclusions.

We have known many a man to belong to a sect or faction, political and also religious, for no other reason than that the father did before him and that he had no strength of conviction of his own, yet would lash with the zeal of a bigot, all who differed from him and the manner of the father before him. The child was taught what others had thought before him, but did not think nor question for himself.

Old tradition usurps the place of original thought, and error becomes so thoroughly assimilated with truth that the process of disintegration is as slow as the evolution of the generations. The new of to-day is the outgrowth of the old of yes-

terday and is just as deserving of human consideration.

The gradual growing out of old errors, whether of belief or custom, and the ingrowing of the true and upright constitutes reform, The few of to-day, deeply conscious of the errors and transgressions of the past, pioneer the unequal struggle between the true and the false; hewing a slow but sure pathway through the wilderness of unscientific conceptions and unsound conclusions. The many dispute every footstep of progress, almost inviting some swift revolution before they build anew. The extravagance of the age demands retrenchment; that would be reformatory: but extravagance prefers the feast of to-day and will take the famine when it is inevitable; this is revolutionary.

The state pampers her sons and steadily refuses justice to her daughters. Justice willl come, even though heaven need

send the thunderbolt of ruin to state and church to enforce it. From that awful pyre of national devastation, the daughters of the land will rise side by side with the sons on the divine plane of human equality, to redeem and make free with more effulgent knowledge and sublime wisdom, garnered from the experience of the past---to build together a nobler history among the destinies of the nations. So "let justice be done though the heavens fall."

This question of Woman's Suffrage, which seems so complicated to the unequal views of a class of individuals, adjusts itself unerringly when weighed in the scales of justice. Justice says, "if the franchise be a privilege, then it should belong to woman as well as to man; if it be a duty, it also becomes individual, and no person can justly perform the duties of another."

Intelligence should be the basis of the

franchise, which is also the sweeping decree that intelligence should be universal. To have intelligence we must educate the embryo faculties of the mind. The hope of the world is in the rising generation. Our common schools are the cradles of American Liberty, and instead of being the overcrowded hotbeds of physical and mental disorder, they must be so multiplied and regulated that every child, male and female, rich and poor, should recieve equal and abundant opportunity for intellectual and physical development.

That ignorant men now have the power of ballot is no reason that intelligent woman should be debarred the same privilege. That some women do not want the franchise is no reason why it should be illegal to those who would not ignore the duty of this republican privilege.

The aggregate of slaves did not demand their liberty, yet it was just and righteous to make them free. The ignorant do not

clamor for intelligence, yet the state wisely legislates for education. The barbarous nations do not desire enlightenment. The heathen do not desire Christianity, yet the great and good of many ages have sacrificed country, home, friends, and life itself to offer them its teachings.

Women are but dimly concious of their power, so circumscribed are their limits. Nor can man rise to the full power and majesty of manhood while women hang as fettered and helpless appendages upon his resources and his strength. Woman must be free, independent, self-reliant and individualized; then will she be man's most worthy helpmate, companion and co-worker.

The argument that the franchise will unfit woman for the duties of wife and mother falls powerless when we reflect that paralell arguments would be equally significant if applied as an obstacle to the enfranchisment of men. Let justice be

done, and the inevitable result will be the enlargement and uplifting of the national life.

The church holds with fatal pertinacity to the letter of the past, though both clergy and laymen practically ignore them. Will the church purge itself of the unreasonable dogmas which emanated from the mental monstrosities of the popes fanatical sovereigns and self-righteous Calvins of the unlettred past, rather than from a perfect Deity? Will the church open her spiritual arms to all God's children and make the Christ-love a reality of universal benificence? Or will she continue to exalt on the one hand and send forth her fiat of condemnation on the other, according to the fallible doctrine of priests and bishops? If the ecclesiastical establishments have the truth, the whole, absolute truth, why fear to shed its divine radiance over the great multitude of benighted souls? If truth is mightier

than falsehood, which should tremble and quake before the other? Truth belongs to the universal and absolute---it belongs to all humanity and cannot be obscured in magnificent synagogues, loaded with costly ornamentation, pew rents and mortgages.

Why must these hired divines stand aloof from the great unwashed, thanking God that they are not as other men are, or even as these poor Spiritualists.

If the religious bodies of to-day have all of truth, why fear the innovation of a demonstrated immortality? Fear proves us slaves of error, for truth makes us free and fearless. And yet in every age of the world, positive religionists have steadfastly opposed the investigations and conclusions of scientific research. Science is based upon the immutability of the laws of nature and the complete harmony of every event of the universe. Science acknowledges the necessity and reason of a

law. It gathers substance from the vast realm of facts traces backward to hidden causes of existing effect snd onward to ultimate results.

A religion which involves an acknowledgement of God as the author of all law, which stimulates to recognition of duty to every surrounding object, enkinkling emotions of aspiration, reverence and devotion toward all truth, from whatever source it may emanate, must in the hopeful future be the religion of the enlightened world. It will listen with high enthusiasm and tender awe to the logical inductions of reason, the proofs of science and the beautiful inspsrations of every age of the world, and the coming people will worship God in spirit and in truth.

Although there is a growing liberality among the professed evangelists of the age, yet religion, as represented in the fixed creeds of many religious sects, is a policy of bigotry, self-righteousness and intoler-

ance, that will persecute what it cannot proselyte and anathematize what it dare not destroy. Jesus, the most radical of spiritual reformers, was crucified: insomuch that the truths he uttered were fatal to the existing laws of Moses, accepted by the people as direct from God. The rack, the stake and the cross are dead issues of the past in this land, but the reformer of to-day undergoes a crucible no lees terrible: that the wound is upon the spirit and not upon the flesh---in the slanders, false testimony, evil gossip and misrepresentations, that in the refinement of cruelty are hurled upon those who dare to be true to their convictions, if adverse to popular opinion.

When Galileo gave to th world the result of his investigations and declared to Papal Rome the revolutions of the earth. there was a revolt in the religious world. Galileo's discoveries were declared to be contrary to Scripture---the pope issued a

proclamation---claiming direct communication from God---asserting that the earth did not move. The story of his persecutions is too well known to be repeated. The Inquisition had done its worst when that great spirit quailed under the torture of the flesh and he retracted what nature had revealed to him under the scrutiny of his master search.

Luther, the pioneer reformer, in his grand stride toward religious liberty, when he assumed for every individual the right to interpret the Scriptures according to his own intelligence, thus giving intellectual liberty to the religious age, braved the anathema of the church and the persecutions of the catholic world.

When the investigators of to-day declare that there is a law by which we may span the chasm of death and communicate with those who dwell in spheres of spiritual being and thus gain new knowledge of immortality, stand beneath a storm of

reproach and accusation, of which insanity is the very least.

Servetus was burned at the stake through the zealous bigotry of Calvin, because he dared to declare his belief in the unity instead of the trinity of God: and these were Marshals in the grand army of human martyrs, struggling forever toward the truth which shall make us free. To-day, revered and honored by the very horde that spurned them, as heralds of larger liberty yet to be. So the investigator of to-day may well await the verdict of coming generations. Newton, Franklin, Morse, Tyndall, Darwin, Huxley, and hosts of others have faced the scorn, derision and prejudice of the world, strong in the conviction of the truer and nobler future of the race.

Why this terrible protest that spares from its ostracism neither learning, age nor sex? Is it that truth is conservative, and has arrayed itself in relentless con-

flict against error, or is it that intolerance is afraid of truth---afraid of investigation. We meet our friend with the glad tidings of a proven immortality, and he turns coldly away as if it were a bitter lie. But thank God, they come to us from the by-ways and the hedges, from the high places and the low places, and angels come and talk to us, and we find we are as one, on the level plane of human brotherhood.

To believe or not to believe cannot alter the truth that makes us free, and we who have heard the whispers of the angels may possess our souls in patience, while the battle of the creeds goes on. We need not fear, though the keen arrows of falsehood lacerate the sensitive spirit. The holy spirit of truth is with us, and shall make us steadfast strong and glad.

The earth glows with a new beauty. There is new beauty in the faces we love---we catch fresh glimpses of the soul, and

the temple of the soul is ever beautiful to the soul seeing eye. I can perceive no inconsistency between true Spiritualism of to-day and Christianity as taught by Jesus, I cannot perceive why the churches of to-day cannot accept the God-given truths of Spiritualism. It is a need of the human soul, else the law for its fulfilment would not exist. While we know that our loved ones that we left in the cold trance of death have spanned the awful chasm and come to us with loving words as in the olden time, we would gladly shake off every ism and stand forth, free and enfranchised as sons and daughters of one God, on the level plane of common humanity, seeking only to know that which is true. But when we tell of tender voices that have floated to us in some quiet hour, revealing of another and spiritual life succeeding the physical, beyond the change of death---of existence too beautiful for language to describe---of joys that can-

not be uttered, the professed servitors of the meek and lowly Jesus smite us with their consecrated lips---denounce as gross and sacreligious swindling, the sweet truth of converse with the angels.

We are called free-lovers: would to God that we were; would that love might deluge this life of ours and make it pure and sweet as heaven. With a sneer that is not of Christ we are called affinity-seekers. Great God! may the spirit of thy divine affinity descend upon every soul in thy presence and make us one with the beautiful, good and true.

Said St. James, one of the most logical of the disciples of Jesus: "If any man among you seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain." And so, fearless of all that now is, and all that is to come, we must prove well every problem, whether of physical or spiritual import and abide by that which is true; and

when the enfranchised soul shall step forth into those higher realms of spiritual light and love, illumined by the tender presences gone before, truth shall come to us in diviner beauty and truth shall make us free.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 022 007 285 A